

INTERNATIONAL SECURITY / MIDDLE EAST UPDATE
June 28 - July 6, 2012

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1. Unsung in Afghanistan (07-06-2012)

Ryan C. Crocker, Ambassador to Afghanistan
Op-Ed, The Washington Post, July 6, 2012

I do two things each week at our management meeting: Read aloud the names of colleagues, mostly military but occasionally civilian, who have given their lives in service of our country; and welcome those recently arrived to serve the State Department, the U.S. Agency for International Development and other agencies. These volunteers leave homes, family and sometimes careers to work 16-plus hours a day, six to seven days a week, living in shipping containers. All are aware of the threats we face at the embassy and the more frequent indiscriminate fire against field positions.

These are tough jobs, in a tough place, under even tougher conditions. One cannot underestimate our civilian volunteers' contributions to achieving our goal of creating a peaceful, stable, self-sustaining Afghanistan that can no longer harbor terrorists who would attack the United States. Since I arrived last July, Afghan forces have begun to take the lead on security for about 75 percent of the population. Never before have so many Afghans had access to health care and education, both boys and girls.

In April, it was Afghan forces who repelled simultaneous attacks in four provinces and Kabul. In May, our countries' presidents signed a Strategic Partnership Agreement with mutual commitments that ensure we will be allies well into the future.

While work remains, none of this would have been possible without the American men and women who volunteered to serve here. People like Paul Folmsbee, our senior officer in regional command east, and Karl Rios, head of the Provincial Reconstruction Team in Logar Province. Both work closely with local government, security, business, civil and religious leaders. On April 15, during a meeting with the provincial governor, Karl and Paul spent 12 hours under heavy fire. They sent me a stream of updates and at 2 a.m., still under fire, Paul was evacuated with a badly wounded Afghan soldier. Karl remained on site until dawn, when Afghan forces suppressed the last of the attackers. And once they got the all-clear, both returned to work.

This team is motivated by a desire to make a difference for others. A civilian officer in the east is helping facilitate a program to teach 200 madrassa high school students basic computer and Internet skills to better connect them to job opportunities and to the outside world. "When I touched the mouse for the first time and put my eyes on the monitor screen," said one student, Fatima, "I felt that I was flying to the sky and seeing a new world of brightness, which gave my heart much happiness."

While our civilian employees are considered targets, we have not simply hunkered down. Regional security officers and drivers risk their lives to support more than a hundred daily engagements, essential to diplomacy, between Americans and Afghans in Kabul and beyond. I was humbled by their work during the attacks against our embassy in September and April, when I joined them in the operations room.

Despite the danger, our civilian and military personnel, working with their Afghan counterparts, regularly travel "outside the wire," helping Afghans refurbish homes, canals and irrigation systems left dormant or damaged by the insurgency. For International Women's Day, civilian Jessica Brandt and her military counterpart, Lt. Col. Barbara Crawford, worked with female Afghan partners to stage an empowerment event for more than 400 women.

The U.S. commander, Gen. Marine John Allen, also recognizes the commitment of our civilians. "Many of the men and women of the State Department serve out in the field, riding in the same vehicles as our Marines and soldiers, living in very austere forward operating bases, exposed to the same hardships and the same dangers that our military personnel face. And yet they go unarmed," he said. "I cannot praise them highly enough. Without them and this close relationship, we would not be able to accomplish all we have so far."

I'd also like to thank the 859 Afghan staffers who risk their lives every day to work for the betterment of their country and ours. It takes a special kind of heroism for them to serve alongside us. Taj, for instance, has worked for the U.S. government for more than 20 years; he returned from Pakistan after the fall of Taliban as the first local staffer in the reopened embassy. His outreach to imams to discuss religious tolerance and women's rights under the Koran is achieving measurable results in fighting extremism. Reza helps connect embassy leadership with politicians and thought leaders, supporters and critics, to hear their concerns and ideas.

Working alongside some of the most committed and determined people that Afghanistan and the United States have to offer has deeply enriched the last assignment I will take in the service of my country. It has left me confident about the future of their nation and ours. I have served in a lot of hard places, with a lot of very good people. None has been better than those I have been privileged to call my colleagues here.

2. State's Rose on Missile Defense and European Security (07-03-2012)

U.S. Department of State

*Remarks by Frank A. Rose, Deputy Assistant Secretary, Bureau of Arms Control, Verification and Compliance
8th International Conference on Missile Defence, Paris, France, July 3, 2012*

Missile Defense and European Security

Thank you so much for inviting me to speak today. This venue provides an opportunity for constructive dialogue on missile defense, and in this context, I will share an update on the U.S. approach to missile defense. At the State Department, I am responsible for overseeing a wide range of defense policy issues, including missile defense. In that capacity, it was my responsibility to negotiate the details of the Ballistic Missile Defense (BMD) agreements with Poland, Romania, and Turkey that will enable the United States to implement the European Phased Adaptive Approach, the U.S. contribution to NATO missile defense. I will touch more on this later in my presentation, but suffice to say that I have been focused over the last couple of years on ensuring that we are able to meet the vision President Obama laid out in his 2009 announcement regarding the European Phased Adaptive Approach.

Missile Defense Policy

Today, there is a growing threat from short-, medium-, and intermediate-range ballistic missiles to our deployed forces, allies, and partners. This threat is likely to increase in both quantitative and qualitative terms in the coming years, as some states are increasing their inventories, and making their ballistic missiles more accurate, reliable, and survivable.

Recognizing the seriousness of the ballistic missile threat, the United States seeks to create an environment, based on strong cooperation with allies and partners, which will diminish an adversary's confidence in the effectiveness of ballistic missile attacks. This will devalue ballistic missiles and provide a disincentive for their development, acquisition, deployment, and use. To that end, President Obama has made international cooperation on missile defense a key priority, and we are pursuing a region-by-region approach based on the following three principles:

- 1) First, the United States will strengthen regional deterrence architectures built upon solid cooperative relationships with an eye toward efficiently incorporating assets and structures that our partners already have today or are seeking.
- 2) Second, the United States is pursuing phased adaptive approaches (PAAs) to missile defense within key regions that are tailored to their unique deterrence requirements and threats, including the scale, scope, and pace of their development, and the capabilities available and most suited for deployment. Specifically, we will phase in the best available technology to meet existing and evolving threats, and adapt to situations that evolve in the future.
- 3) Third, recognizing that our supply of missile defense assets cannot meet the global demand we face, the United States is developing mobile capabilities that can be relocated to adapt to a changing threat and provide surge defense capabilities where they are most needed.

Missile defense plays an important role in the broader U.S. international security strategy, supporting both deterrence and diplomacy. Missile defense assures our allies and partners that the United States has the will and the means to deter and, if necessary, defeat a limited ballistic missile attack against the U.S. homeland and regional ballistic missile attacks against our deployed forces, allies, and partners.

NATO and European Missile Defense

Today I will focus on our work in Europe, which continues to receive a great deal of attention. In order to augment the defense of the United States against a future long-range threat and provide more comprehensive and more rapid protection to our deployed forces and European Allies against the current short- and medium- range threat, President Obama outlined a four-phase approach for European missile defense called the European Phased Adaptive Approach or EPAA. Through the EPAA, the United States will deploy increasingly capable BMD assets to defend Europe against a ballistic missile threat from the Middle East that is increasing both quantitatively and qualitatively.

The EPAA is designed to protect our deployed forces and Allies in Europe, as well as improve protection of the U.S. homeland against potential ICBMs from the Middle East. As part of Phase 1, we have deployed to Turkey a missile defense radar, referred to as the AN/TPY-2 radar in support of NATO's common missile defense efforts. Also, as part of Phase 1, the United States deployed a BMD-capable Aegis ship to the Mediterranean Sea in March of 2011, and has maintained a BMD-capable ship presence in the region ever since.

Slightly more than a year ago, we reached an agreement with Romania to host a U.S. land-based SM-3 BMD interceptor site, designed to extend missile defense protection to a greater portion of Europe. The land-based SM-3 system to be deployed to Romania is anticipated to become operational in the 2015 timeframe. We also reached an agreement with Poland to place a similar U.S. BMD interceptor site there in the 2018 timeframe, which will extend missile defense protection to all of NATO Europe. Spain has also agreed to host four U.S. Aegis destroyers at the existing naval facility at Rota. These multi-mission ships will support the EPAA as well as other EUCOM and NATO maritime missions.

The Obama Administration is implementing the EPAA within the NATO context. At the 2010 Lisbon Summit, NATO Heads of State and Government approved a new Strategic Concept and took the historic decision to develop the capability to defend NATO European populations and territory against the increasing threat posed by ballistic missile proliferation. The Allies also welcomed the EPAA as a U.S. national contribution to the new NATO territorial missile defense capability, in support of our commitment to the collective defense of the Alliance under Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty.

At the Lisbon Summit, NATO Heads of State and Government also decided to expand the scope of the NATO Active Layered Theatre Ballistic Missile Defense (ALTBMD) program to serve as the command, control, and communications network to support this new capability. NATO allies have committed to investing over \$1 billion for command, control, and communications infrastructure to support NATO missile defense. NATO's plan for missile defense is based on the principle that individual Allies will make voluntary national contributions of the sensors and interceptor systems, BMD capabilities that will be integrated into the NATO ALTBMDC2 backbone. As with any national contribution, Allies are responsible for the costs associated with their own contributions. NATO agreed at Chicago that only the command and control systems of ALTBMDC2 and their expansion to territorial defense are eligible for common funding.

On May 20-21, the NATO Heads of State and Government met in Chicago for the NATO Summit and announced that NATO has achieved an interim BMD capability. This means that the Alliance has an operationally meaningful standing peacetime ballistic missile defense capability. NATO also agreed on the command and control procedures for ballistic missile defense, designated Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR) as the commander for this mission, and demonstrated an interoperable command and control capability. As with all of NATO's operations, full political control by Allies over military actions undertaken pursuant to Interim Capability will be ensured.

To support this interim BMD capability, the United States will offer EPAA assets to the Alliance as voluntary national contributions to the BMD mission, and will welcome contributions by other Allies. For example, President Obama announced in Chicago that he has directed the transfer of the AN/TPY-2 radar deployed in Turkey to NATO operational control. The EPAA also includes BMD-capable Aegis ships that can perform many roles besides BMD. U.S. missile defense-capable ships in Europe are able to operate under NATO operational control when necessary.

These decisions have created a framework for Allies to contribute and optimize their own BMD assets for our collective defense, and the United States welcomes contributions from other Allies. We believe that NATO missile defense will be more effective should Allies decide to provide sensors and interceptors to complement the U.S. EPAA contributions. If Allies should decide to develop their own missile defense capabilities, that would create significant opportunities for European industries. In short, there is absolutely no requirement or assumption that NATO missile defense will be "made in the USA." The only requirement is that the systems contributed by Allies be interoperable with NATO's missile defense command and control capability. Several NATO Allies possess land- and sea-based sensors that could be linked into the system, as well as lower tier systems that can be integrated and used to provide point defense. For example, the Netherlands has indicated that it will spend close to 250 million Euros to modify the radars on its frigates to detect and track ballistic missiles at long ranges and has indicated it will contribute its Patriot BMD systems to the NATO missile defense mission. There are potentially many more opportunities for joint development and procurement.

Russia

An update on missile defense cooperation with Europe should also include a discussion of our efforts to pursue cooperation with the Russian Federation. Missile defense cooperation with Russia is a Presidential priority, as it has been for several Administrations going back to President George H.W. Bush in the early 1990s.

When President Obama announced his new vision for missile defense in Europe in September 2009, he stated that “we welcome Russia’s cooperation to bring its missile defense capabilities into a broader defense of our common strategic interests.” Missile defense cooperation with Russia will not only strengthen our bilateral and NATO-Russia relationships, but also could enhance NATO’s missile defense capabilities. Successful missile defense cooperation would provide concrete benefits to Russia, our NATO Allies, and the United States and will strengthen – not weaken – strategic stability over the long term.

This means it is important to get the Russian Federation inside the missile defense tent now, working alongside the United States and NATO, while we are in the early stages of our efforts. Close cooperation between Russia and the United States and NATO is the best and most enduring way for Russia to gain the assurance that European missile defenses cannot and will not undermine its strategic deterrent.

Russia is not being asked to blindly trust us. Through cooperation, Russia would see firsthand that this system is designed for the ballistic missile threat from outside the Euro-Atlantic area, and that NATO missile defense systems will not undermine Russia’s strategic nuclear deterrent capabilities. Cooperation would send a strong message to proliferators that the United States, NATO, and Russia are working together to counter their efforts.

That said, Russia has raised the issue of wanting a legal guarantee with a set of “military-technical criteria” that could, in effect, create limitations on our ability to develop and deploy future missile defense systems against regional ballistic missile threats such as those presented by Iran and North Korea. We have made it clear that we cannot and will not accept limitations on our ability to defend ourselves, our allies, and our partners, including where we deploy our BMD-capable Aegis ships. These are multi-mission ships that are used for a variety of purposes around the world, not just for missile defense.

While we seek to develop ways to cooperate with Russia on missile defense, it is important to remember that under the terms of Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty, NATO alone bears responsibility for defending the Alliance from the ballistic missile threat. This is why the United States and NATO cannot agree to Russia’s proposal for “sectoral” missile defense. Just as Russia must ensure the defense of Russian territory, NATO must ensure the defense of NATO territory. NATO cannot and will not outsource its Article 5 commitments.

We would, however, be willing to agree to a political framework for cooperation that includes a statement that our missile defenses are not oriented toward Russia. Any such statement would publicly proclaim our intent to work together and chart the direction for cooperation.

During the G-20 Meeting in Los Cabos, Mexico, President Obama and President Putin announced in their June 18 Joint Statement that “despite differences in assessments, we have agreed to continue a joint search for solutions to challenges in the field of missile defense.”

The United States looks forward to continuing discussions with the Russian Federation to develop a mutually agreed framework for missile defense cooperation.

I want to close by noting the obvious which is that the worst-case scenario for dealing with missile threats is after a missile has launched. We are taking several steps diplomatically to counter missile proliferation and address missile programs of concern. We are working with the other 33 Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) Partners to create the global standard for controlling the transfer of equipment, software, and technology that could make a contribution to rockets and unmanned aerial vehicles. We also are working to support the efforts of the Hague Code of Conduct Against Ballistic Missile Proliferation (HCOB), and are working through the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI) to help partners improve their ability to stop shipments of proliferation concern. Those are just some of the efforts that are ongoing to address missile threats, and while we do this work quietly, these efforts are having an impact.

Conclusion

Let me conclude by saying that today’s ballistic missile threats continue to increase in number and sophistication. This increasing threat reinforces the importance of our collaborative missile defense efforts with allies and partners around the world, which not only strengthen regional stability, but also provide protection for our forces serving abroad and augment the defense of the United States.

Thank you for your time and attention.

3. Missile Defense Crucial in U.S. International Security (07-03-2012)

By Merle David Kellerhals Jr. | IIP Staff Writer

Missile defense is a crucial element in the U.S. international security strategy, supporting deterrence and diplomacy, a senior U.S. diplomat said July 3 at an international conference in Paris.

"Missile defense assures our allies and partners that the United States has the will and the means to deter and, if necessary, defeat a limited ballistic missile attack against the U.S. homeland and regional ballistic missile attacks against our deployed forces, allies and partners," Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Frank Rose said at the 8th International Conference on Missile Defense.

Rose, who is in the State Department's Bureau of Arms Control, Verification and Compliance, said the United States recognizes the serious threat posed by ballistic missiles to its military forces stationed abroad, its allies and its partners, and is working to create an environment based on strong cooperation to diminish any adversary's belief in the value of a ballistic missile attack.

The threat from ballistic missiles is expected to grow in the coming years as some states are increasing their inventories and making their ballistic missiles more accurate, reliable and survivable, Rose said.

President Obama in September 2009, acting on the recommendation of the U.S. secretary of defense and chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, announced the European Phased Adaptive Approach for missile defense to provide protection as quickly as possible. Through the phased approach, the United States will deploy assets to defend Europe against a ballistic missile threat from the Middle East, Rose said.

And at the November 2010 NATO Summit in Lisbon, alliance members committed to adopt missile defense as an alliance mission. NATO allies have committed to investing more than \$1 billion for command, control and communications infrastructure to support NATO missile defense, Rose said.

Obama chose to shift away from the deployment of 10 ground-based interceptors and a single radar site in Europe to a system using land- and sea-based SM-3 missile interceptors to provide protection for the United States homeland and NATO European allies. Since September last year, there have been several major breakthroughs that are driving the program to completion.

First, Turkey has agreed to host the Phase One advanced radar system. Romania has agreed to host the Phase Two land-based SM-3 antimissile interceptor site, and Poland has agreed to host the Phase 3 land-based interceptor site, which is expected to be completed in the 2018 timeframe, Rose said.

"The land-based SM-3 system to be deployed to Romania is anticipated to become operational in the 2015 timeframe," Rose told the conference.

In October, Spain agreed to serve as the home port for four U.S. Navy Aegis destroyers at Naval Station Rota, about 100 kilometers northwest of Gibraltar. The port has hosted U.S. Navy ships since the early 1950s.

Rose added that at the 2012 Chicago NATO Summit the allies announced that NATO has achieved an interim ballistic missile defense capability. "This means that the alliance has an operationally meaningful, standing, peacetime ballistic missile defense capability," he said.

Rose said the United States and NATO welcome Russia's cooperation to bring its missile defense capabilities into a broader defense of common strategic interests.

"Missile defense cooperation with Russia will not only strengthen our bilateral and NATO-Russian relationships, but also could enhance NATO's missile defense capabilities," Rose said. "Successful missile defense cooperation would provide concrete benefits to Russia, our NATO allies and the United States, and will strengthen, not weaken, strategic stability over the long run."

4. Statement by Secretary Clinton on her Call With Pakistani Foreign Minister Khar (07-02-2012)

Press Statement

Hillary Rodham Clinton, Secretary of State, Washington, DC

This morning, I spoke by telephone with Pakistani Foreign Minister Hina Rabbani Khar.

I once again reiterated our deepest regrets for the tragic incident in Salala last November. I offered our sincere condolences to the families of the Pakistani soldiers who lost their lives. Foreign Minister Khar and I acknowledged the mistakes that resulted in the loss of Pakistani military lives. We are sorry for the losses suffered by the Pakistani military. We are committed to working closely with Pakistan and Afghanistan to prevent this from ever happening again.

As I told the former Prime Minister of Pakistan days after the Salala incident, America respects Pakistan's sovereignty and is committed to working together in pursuit of shared objectives on the basis of mutual interests and mutual respect.

In today's phone call, Foreign Minister Khar and I talked about the importance of taking coordinated action against terrorists who threaten Pakistan, the United States, and the region; of supporting Afghanistan's security, stability, and efforts towards reconciliation; and of continuing to work together to advance the many other shared interests we have, from increasing trade and investment to strengthening our people-to-people ties. Our countries should have a relationship that is enduring, strategic, and carefully defined, and that enhances the security and prosperity of both our nations and the region.

The Foreign Minister and I were reminded that our troops – Pakistani and American – are in a fight against a common enemy. We are both sorry for losses suffered by both our countries in this fight against terrorists. We have enhanced our counter-terrorism cooperation against terrorists that threaten Pakistan and the United States, with the goal of defeating Al-Qaida in the region.

In addition, I am pleased that Foreign Minister Khar has informed me that the ground supply lines (GLOC) into Afghanistan are opening. Pakistan will continue not to charge any transit fee in the larger interest of peace and security in Afghanistan and the region. This is a tangible demonstration of Pakistan's support for a secure, peaceful, and prosperous Afghanistan and our shared objectives in the region. This will also help the United States and ISAF conduct the planned drawdown at a much lower cost. This is critically important to the men and women who are fighting terrorism and extremism in Afghanistan. Foreign Minister Khar has informed me that, consistent with current practice, no lethal equipment will transit the GLOC into Afghanistan except for equipping the ANSF. In concluding the call, I reiterated our deep appreciation to the Government and the people of Pakistan for their many sacrifices and their critical contribution to the ongoing fight against terrorism and extremism.

5. U.N. Security Council Now United Behind Syria Plan, Clinton Says (07-02-2012)

By Stephen Kaufman | IIP Staff Writer

Because Syria's transitional governing body will be formed by mutual consent, Bashar al-Assad will not play a role, Secretary Clinton says.

Washington — Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton said the transition and peace plan for Syria that was agreed to in Geneva June 30 is significant because of Russia and China's support, and she said Syrian leader Bashar al-Assad will not play a role on the transitional governing body for Syria that is called for under the plan.

Speaking to Bloomberg News in Geneva June 30, Clinton said the five permanent members of the U.N. Security Council and other key states have now endorsed the guidelines and principles of U.N.-Arab League Special Envoy Kofi Annan's peace plan and they have empowered him in his discussions with the Assad regime about ending the violence in Syria and following through with a peaceful political transition.

"Where we are today gives us the basis for going to the U.N. Security Council to discuss what consequences have to be considered and imposed if after empowering Kofi Annan he comes to the Security Council and reports to us — as he said he will do — that the government's not cooperating, that other parties are not cooperating, that he's not making progress," Clinton said.

The United States and other countries have unsuccessfully tried to use the Security Council to address the violence in Syria that has killed at least 14,000 people since March 2011, but resolutions have been vetoed by permanent Security Council members Russia and China.

Clinton said that with Russia and China's support for Annan's efforts, "we will have to act" if the envoy reports noncompliance with the peace plan. "I believe we will be building the case as to why the Security Council should take such action," she said.

Along with ending the violence, Annan's plan calls for the establishment of a transitional governing body ahead of constitutional reform and free elections that could include members of the Syrian government and opposition groups and would be formed by mutual consent.

The secretary told CNN on June 30 that because both the opposition and the government would need to agree on who would serve on the transitional governing body, "there is no way anyone in the opposition would ever consent to Assad or his inside regime cronies with blood on their hands" participating.

All five permanent Security Council members have now agreed to "an approach that absolutely guarantees, if there is a transition that is still the hard work ahead, Assad will not be part of it," she said.

Obama administration, Turkish and Arab League officials, as well as others, are currently meeting with Syrian opposition representatives in Cairo to encourage them to choose representatives for the transitional governing body and for negotiations with the government.

Clinton said the opposition needs to come together and "make a decision about what it means to take responsibility for trying to end a conflict and lead a nation."

6. Secretary Clinton's Interview with CNN on Syria (07-01-2012)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE, Office of the Spokesperson, July 1, 2012 (2012/T67-13)

INTERVIEW

Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton With Jill Dougherty of CNN

QUESTION: Secretary Clinton, thank you very much. I know it's been a very long and intense day.

Let's begin with that critical point that you've talked about so many times, that Assad has to step down, leave. Now, it appears that the Russians won that point. There is no direct demand that Assad go.

SECRETARY CLINTON: Well, Jill, I couldn't disagree with you more. I think that what the agreement clearly states is that there has to be a transitional governing body that will be constituted of people who are there by the mutual consent of the government and the opposition. Now, unless I am wildly off base, there is no way anyone in the opposition would ever consent to Assad or his inside regime cronies with blood on their hands being on any transitional governing body.

But I said weeks ago that Assad going could be an outcome as well as a precondition, and what was important is that we were on a path with an empowered Special Envoy with the full support of all the P-5 members, including Russia and China, with an approach that absolutely guarantees, if there is a transition that is still the hard work ahead, Assad will not be part of it.

And we've had lots of experience in this. I mean, we just went through more than a year with Ali Abdullah Saleh in Yemen, and he kept saying he would go, then he wouldn't go. And people just kept bearing down and pushing forward and eventually were successful.

But until today, we did not have the kind of roadmap in specifics, with concrete actions, that you could telegraph to Damascus, where I believe they are shocked that Russia and China have signed onto this agreement, which so clearly says goodbye to them in this transition.

QUESTION: But the timing. In other words, this could be down the road; this could be a year from now. What?

SECRETARY CLINTON: Well, of course, making peace is really hard. And when it happens and how it happens is dependent on so many factors. And what we did today was to make clear that, for the first time, we had agreed-upon approach that satisfied the Russians and the Chinese and the neighbors, who are very anxious, for understandable reasons, about what's going on in Syria.

Jill, there's no guarantee that we're going to be successful. I just hate to say that, because it's the fact. But I am very grateful that we now have a roadmap that has everybody on board with a clear path towards transition, with a clear set of expectations that have to be fulfilled. And now I believe the internal reality within both the regime and elements of the opposition will begin to move in a direction that, I hope, puts us on an inevitable path.

QUESTION: But how do you get to that transitional body? Because people are fighting.

SECRETARY CLINTON: Right.

QUESTION: I mean, isn't it unrealistic to think that you're going to get the body that you say will strip him of his power?

SECRETARY CLINTON: No, because I just look at history. I look at the conflicts that I'm familiar with. I have to smile thinking about Queen Elizabeth shaking the hand of Martin McGuinness, an IRA commander, just this past week. Whenever you start with a process like this, number one, there's neither a guarantee as to the outcome nor as to the timing, but you are beginning to change the international calculations of everybody who is a party to the conflict.

And that's what I think will really give Kofi Annan the support he needs. Because now when he goes to Damascus and he says, "I have been instructed by all Security Council members, including the Russians and the Chinese, to begin talking to you about appointing an empowered interlocutor to meet with me and meet with representatives of the opposition. Who are you going to appoint?" and they're not going to be able to say, "Well, there's division in the international community, and there are a lot of people who are on our side." They are pretty much left with Iran.

QUESTION: Do you really believe that the Russians can convince Assad?

SECRETARY CLINTON: Jill, I think that's a great question, because one of the points that became clear, both in my long conversations with Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov last night in St. Petersburg and then in our larger group today – they have committed to trying, but they've also admitted that they may or may not have enough leverage to convince not just one man but a family and a regime that their time is over. But what was important was to get them on board to make this effort on their own, using their leverage, and in support of Kofi Annan. And I think it's a significant step forward in our efforts to try to figure out the least violent, disruptive, destabilizing way to end this conflict and give the Syrian people a chance at a different future.

QUESTION: So if the Russians are supposed to influence Assad, you are supposed to influence the opposition. How do you do that? What do you say to them?

SECRETARY CLINTON: Well, not just me, but others as well. I mean, we will have an American presence at the meeting of the opposition in Cairo next week. But the Turks, the Qataris, the Arab League, all who were part of our negotiations to reach this agreement today, will all be there. Because what's the alternative? I mean, what are they going to do? Just continue to have meeting after meeting, or are they going to buckle down to the hard work of choosing someone to – or several people – to represent them in a transitional governing body to engage in the negotiation. And they're going to have to finally make a decision about what it means to take responsibility for trying to end a conflict and lead a nation.

We went through this in Libya. The Transitional National Council had both members of the Qadhafi regime, who had fairly recently left, along with longtime oppositionists. So we have seen how important it is to have an organizing focus. We now have that. So at the meeting of the opposition in Cairo, they will hear from a number of different voices that you have to make some decisions about how to be part of this process.

QUESTION: There are some people who say that the Russians want to play this out, that they look at the election schedule in the United States, November there's an election, they realize that there's little appetite either in Washington or practically any other capital for military action, and so they're just playing it out, banking on the fact that nobody is going to really take any type of strong military step. What do you say to that?

SECRETARY CLINTON: Well, I'd say that if we were talking a week ago, based on what we were hearing from the Russians, from the very highest levels, from President Putin on down, we would never have even had the meeting in Geneva, they would not have come under any circumstances, and they would not have participated in reaching the agreement that we reached today. So what happened?

I think they have begun to realize that they are trying to ride two horses at the same time, so to speak. They are constantly saying we have no love lost for Assad, we don't have any stake in him staying, but we are afraid of the violence and what will come after. So the argument I have made to them consistently is that their failure to be part of the solution is the surest way to ensure we have a civil war with sectarian conflict that spills over the borders.

And I can't speak for them. I can't put myself into their internal discussions. But I believe, based on my lengthy conversation last night and our discussions today, they've decided to get on one horse, and it's the horse that would back a transition plan that Kofi Annan would be empowered to implement.

QUESTION: Okay. Could I ask you a quick question on Egypt? President – incoming President Morsi wants to ask the United States to extradite Sheikh Omar Abdel Rahman from the World Trade Center attack in 1993 on the basis of – humanitarian basis. What would the U.S. do in that case?

SECRETARY CLINTON: Well, I think it's very clear that he was given due process. He was tried and convicted for his participation in terrorist activities, most particularly the bombing of the World Trade Center in 1993. The evidence is very clear and convincing, and he was sentenced to life in prison, and we have every reason to back the process and the sentence that he received and will do so.

7. Iran Facing Increased Financial Pressure over Nuclear Program (06-29-2012)

By Stephen Kaufman | IIP Staff Writer

U.S. officials say they have designed sanctions against Iran's oil industry to pressure the Iranian government into addressing concerns that it is developing nuclear weapons, while not disrupting world oil markets and raising energy prices. As the European Union prepares to impose an oil embargo on July 1, the Obama administration says the costs to Iran are rising. Administration officials urged Iranian leaders "to take concrete steps to address the international community's concerns and to abide by their international obligations."

Speaking to reporters June 28 in a teleconference, senior Obama administration officials said due to international restrictions, Iran's crude oil exports have dropped from around 2.5 million barrels per day in 2011 to 1.5 million barrels per day in 2012. The International Energy Agency predicts the reduction is costing Iran at least \$8 billion in lost revenues each quarter, with further reductions expected as more sanctions take effect, including the EU ban.

That has "a significant impact on the revenue that the government can draw from," one official said.

Additionally, inflation in Iran is now above 20 percent and its currency, the rial, has lost about 40 percent of its value since November 2011. The sanctions "are having a major adverse impact on Iran's economy, and things will only go from bad to worse unless Iran gets serious" and engages on its nuclear activities, an official said.

Through a "very methodical process" over the past several months, "we have deliberately set about implementing these sanctions in a way that would have the maximum impact on Iran," including getting major importers of Iranian oil to reduce or even stop their imports.

That "allows us to phase in these sanctions in a way that has minimal impact on global energy markets," the official said. "We want to take steps to ensure that ... they're phased in a way that doesn't drive up the price of oil, which would again ultimately end up benefiting the Iranians."

On June 28, Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton announced that China and Singapore had significantly reduced their volume of Iranian crude oil purchases and had qualified for a 180-day exception to U.S. sanctions that target the financial institutions of countries that knowingly have significant transactions with Iran's oil industry or Iran's Central Bank.

"When the European Union oil embargo goes into effect July 1, Iran's leaders will understand even more fully the urgency of the choice they face and the unity of the international community," Clinton said in a statement.

The secretary said Iran's leaders have a path to "fully rejoin the global economy" if they will "seriously and substantively" engage with the P5+1 group, consisting of France, the United Kingdom, Germany, Russia, China and the United States.

Expert-level talks between Iran and the P5+1 are scheduled for July 3 in Istanbul. Clinton urged Iran to take the opportunity to "demonstrate its willingness to take concrete steps toward resolving the nuclear issue." Failure to do so "will result in continuing pressure and isolation from the international community," she said.

A senior Obama administration official said that in May at a meeting held in Baghdad, the P5+1 countries "collectively put forward a balanced and reasonable proposal that addresses the most pressing security threats from Iran's nuclear program."

Their proposal "followed the approach of step-by-step efforts with reciprocal benefits for both sides, again, agreed by all six governments involved on our team," the official said.

"So far we haven't gotten a serious Iranian response to that proposal, and we urge Iran's leaders to focus on that and come back with a serious response," the official said.

In the P5+1 discussions, aimed at addressing widespread concerns that Iran is developing nuclear weapons under the cover of a civilian energy program, Iran has yet to demonstrate seriousness or "a sense of purpose," an official said, and "Istanbul is another opportunity for Iran to move in the right direction."

8. U.S. Will Support Afghanistan After 2014 Exit of Foreign Troops (06-28-2012)

The United States will remain a staunch supporter of Afghanistan after 2014, when most foreign troops are scheduled to leave and the government in Kabul assumes full responsibility for security, according to U.S. Permanent Representative to the United Nations Susan Rice.

Rice said the United States is looking forward to the Tokyo Conference on Afghanistan July 8, when the international community will discuss assistance levels to Afghanistan after 2014. The current commitments extend until the end of that year.

"The enemies of the Afghan people should know that there will be steadfast and capable Afghan forces standing against them, with strong NATO support" after 2014, Rice said at the U.N. Security Council open debate on Afghanistan in New York June 27. "The transition is on track, Afghans are increasingly standing up for their own security and future," she said.

Rice said the United States and other Western allies have signed strategic partnership agreements with Afghanistan, demonstrating that "the international community continues to come together to support Afghanistan."

Rice said the United States does not seek permanent military bases in Afghanistan, and the U.S. presence there after 2014 "will be shaped in close consultation with the Afghan government and will support Afghanistan's social and economic development, security, institutions and regional cooperation."

She appealed to the Afghan government to intensify its fight against corruption and improve the effectiveness of its institutions because the country "cannot rely on donor financing indefinitely."

"As Afghanistan makes progress on governance and anti-corruption, the United States and the international community will take concrete steps of our own to help," Rice said. "Continued investment in Afghanistan is essential, and it should come from both governments and the private sector," she added.

Rice praised the work of the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees to help Afghan refugees return voluntarily, a process that combined with improved security will create economic opportunity.

"The Afghan government and people, the region and the international community have demonstrated their resolve and long-term commitment to a secure, stable and prosperous Afghanistan," Rice said in closing. "The United States will work with all of them, every step of the way."
